

SFY 2012

INTERCITY BUS SERVICE--INTENT TO APPLY

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) seeks to assist bus service between communities in New Hampshire and solicits expressions of interest from qualified intercity bus providers to perform this service under contract to the State. Expressions of intent to apply must be received by 3:00 p.m. on February 1, 2011 and an application will be provided at that time. Questions regarding this project should be directed to Shelley Winters, Public Transportation Administrator via email at swinters@dot.state.nh.us.

Background:

The Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 Nonurbanized Area Formula Program provides the State with a grant that includes support of intercity bus service. Section 5311(f) provides such support for the following eligible activities:

- Operating assistance for direct operation of intercity service;
- Operating grants through purchase-of-service agreements;
- Capital grants for intercity vehicles and equipment, bus shelters, joint-use stops and depots;
- Planning and marketing for intercity bus transportation;
- User-side subsidies;
- Demonstration projects;
- Coordination of rural connections between small public transportation operations and intercity bus carriers.

Definition:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has defined intercity bus service for the purpose of this program as follows: regularly scheduled service for the general public that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available. (Urban area is defined very broadly in 49 U.S.C. 5302(a)(16) as "an area that includes a municipality or other built-up place that ... is appropriate for a local public transportation system to serve individuals in the locality.") Package express service may also be included, if incidental to passenger transportation. Commuter service is excluded from the definition. Intercity service is not limited by the size of the vehicle used or by the identity of the carrier.

Objectives:

- To support the connection between nonurbanized areas and the larger regional or national systems of intercity bus service;
- To support services to meet the intercity travel needs of residents in nonurbanized areas;
- To support the infrastructure of intercity bus network through planning and marketing assistance and capital investment in facilities and equipment;
- To preserve existing rural bus services, and in making existing services available to more New Hampshire citizens through feeder or connector services.

Funding:

Federal funding is available through the Department for up to 80% of capital costs and project administration and 50% of net operating costs. Net operating expenses are those expenses that remain after the provider subtracts operating revenues (i.e. farebox revenues) from eligible operating expenses. Operating costs include fuel, drivers' salaries and benefits, dispatcher salaries and benefits, mechanics' salaries and benefits, replacement tires and parts, maintenance and repairs, and licenses. Administrative costs may include insurance premiums, office supplies, rent and project director, secretary and bookkeeper salaries and benefits.

There is no available State match for the non-federal share, thus potential operators shall identify the non-federal source of match for the proposed project, which must be in accordance with program guidance.

Basic Qualifications:

Organizations submitting proposals for this service should have the following:

- The financial capacity to establish and maintain service during the contract period;
- Interest and ability to provide service to the general public, including elderly and disabled persons;
- Ability to maintain records of trips, passengers, expenses and revenues;
- Willingness to sign annual FTA Certifications and Assurances and comply with federal and state regulations related to civil rights and equal employment opportunities, disadvantaged business enterprise, safety, FTA Drug & Alcohol testing, labor protection provisions and other areas related to transportation grant funding.

Evaluation will be based on:

1. The extent to which the organization and its personnel have demonstrated competence in performing similar work.
2. The extent to which the applicant has adequate equipment, facilities and financial resources to perform the work.
3. The extent to which the applicant's proposal demonstrates a thorough understanding of the needs of the region state.
4. The degree to which the proposed budget and the level of federal funding requested will be adequate to carry out the service.
5. The extent to which the proposed service is consistent with existing regional transportation plans or otherwise meets an identified need.

The Department may request additional information and/or an interview with one or more applicants. The Department will contract with the entity or entities selected for intercity service for a period beginning July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. If the service is successful in the Department's opinion, future contracts may follow on an annual basis.